

Planning Wolf Management in Michigan

The Need to Integrate Biological and Social Concerns



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June 24, 2006

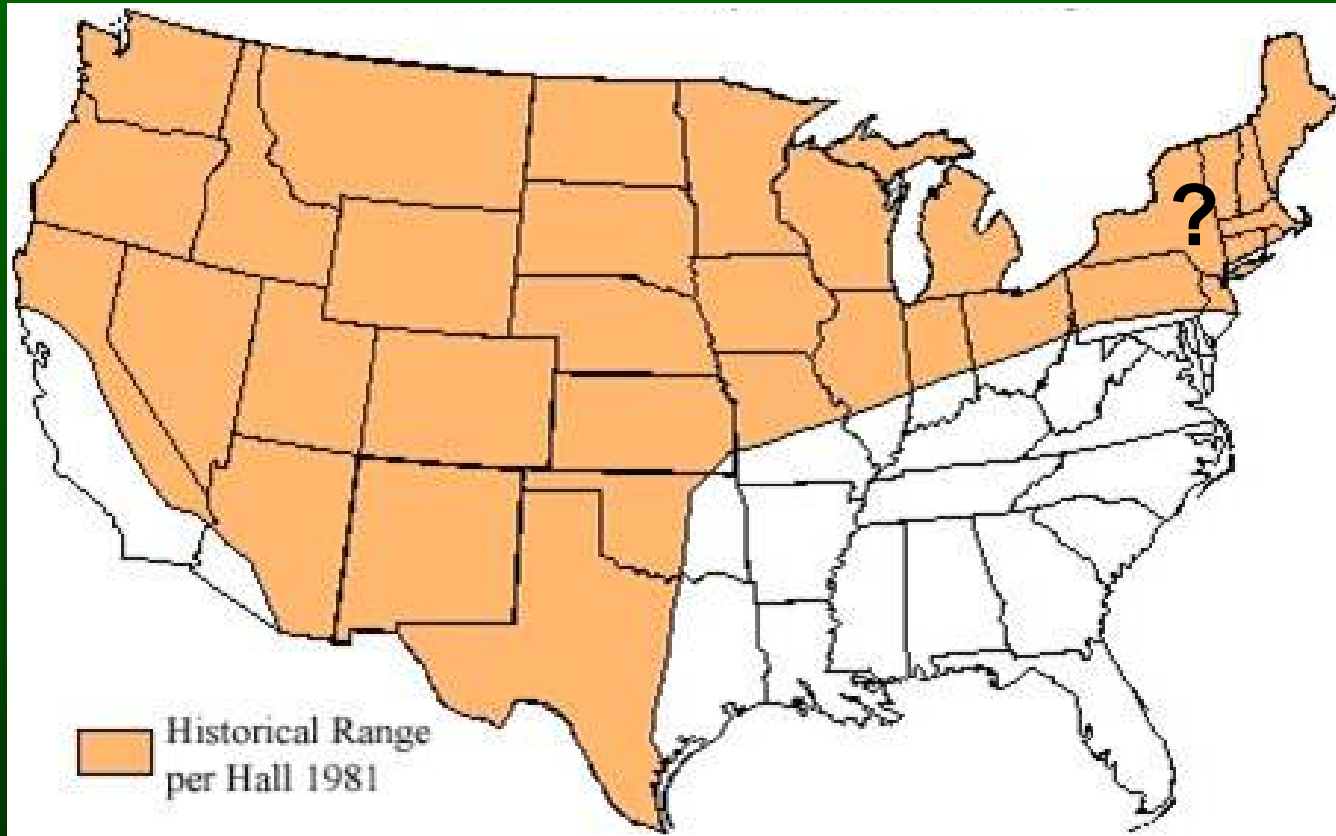


Talk Overview

- History
- Population data
- Recovery criteria and legal status
- Need to revise Michigan wolf plan
- Planning process



Historic Range





Management History

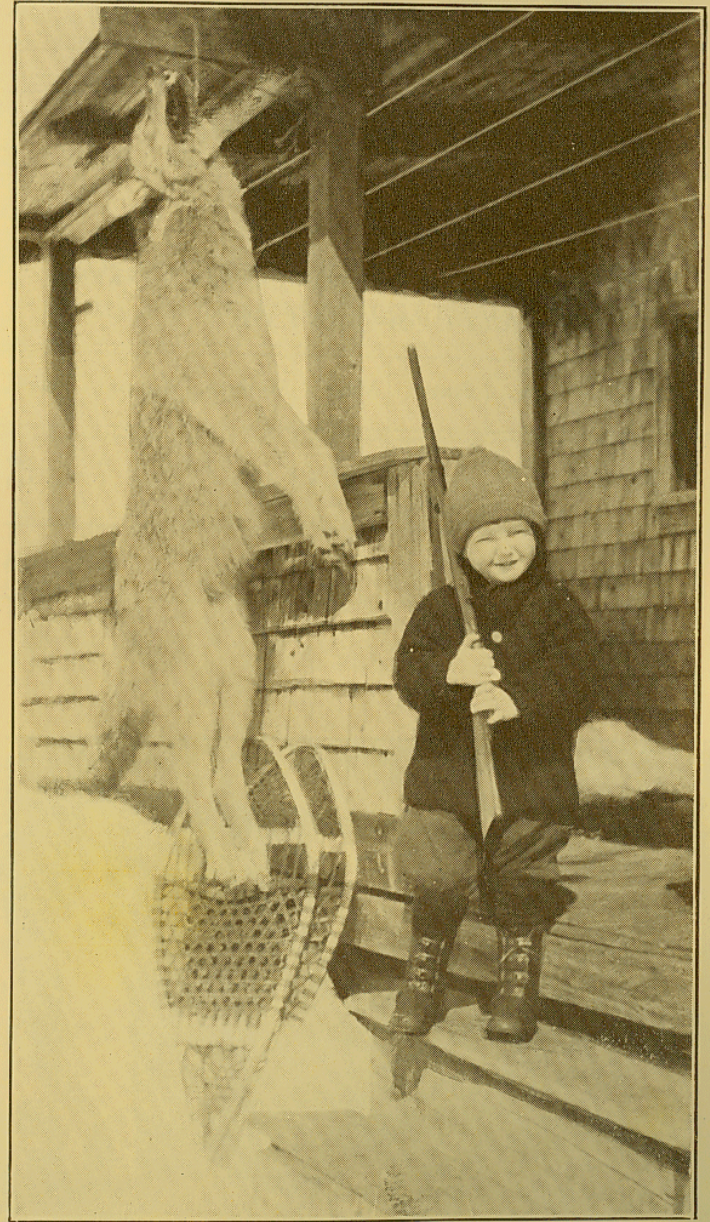
1800: wolves throughout MI

1817–1960: bounties and State trapper system

1935: eradicated from LP

1956: ~100 wolves in UP

1973: ~ 6 wolves In UP



"THE YOUNG WOLF HUNTER"
Kindergarten tots in Michigan schools are told that the wolf is a menace to better forms of wild life.

Management Shift

1965: wolves afforded legal protection In MI

1974: listed under State & Federal endangered species laws



Attempted Wolf Reintroduction: 1974

4 wolves from MN

Released in Huron Mountains

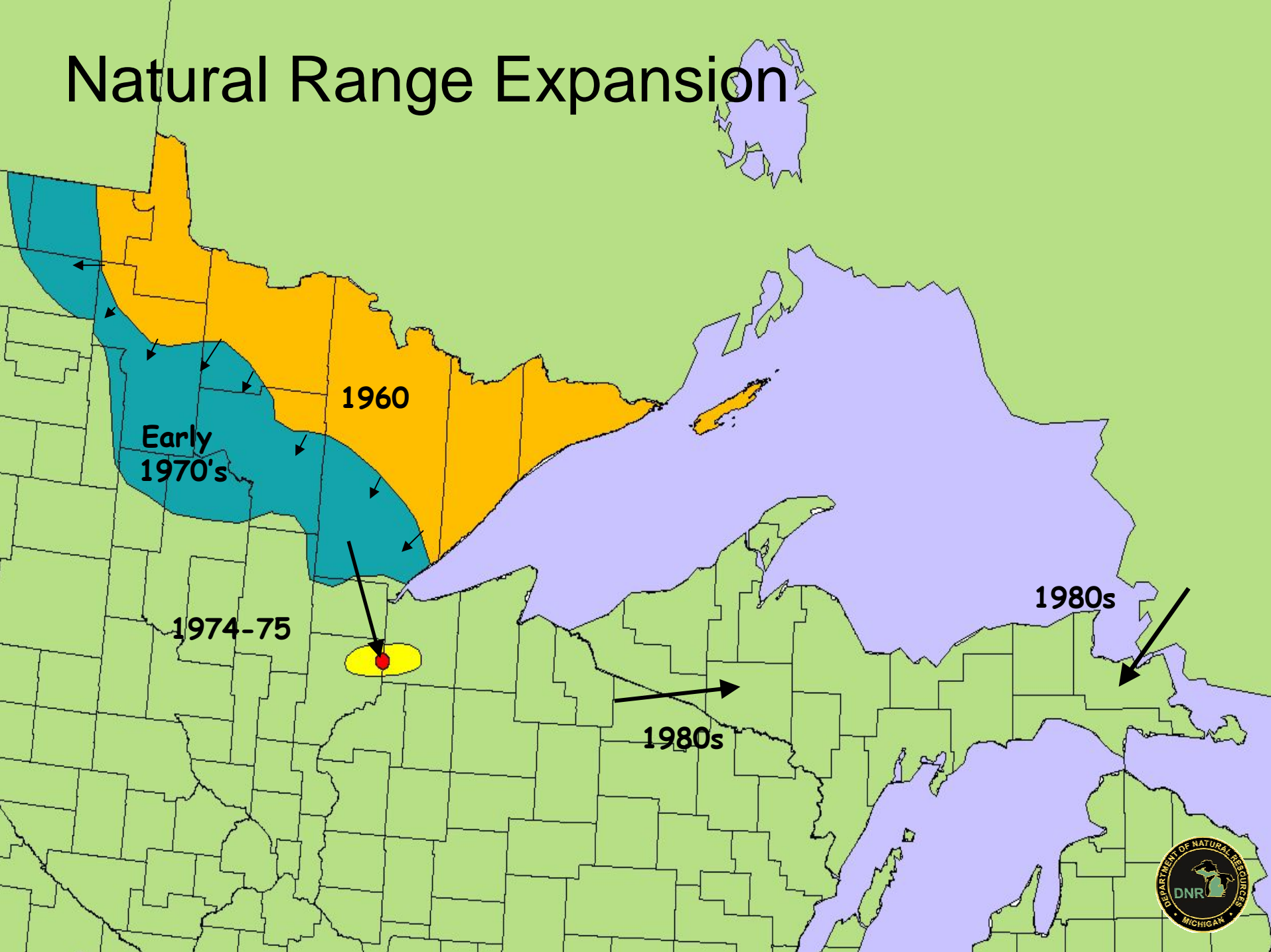
All 4 wolves killed within 8 months

Wolves did not reproduce

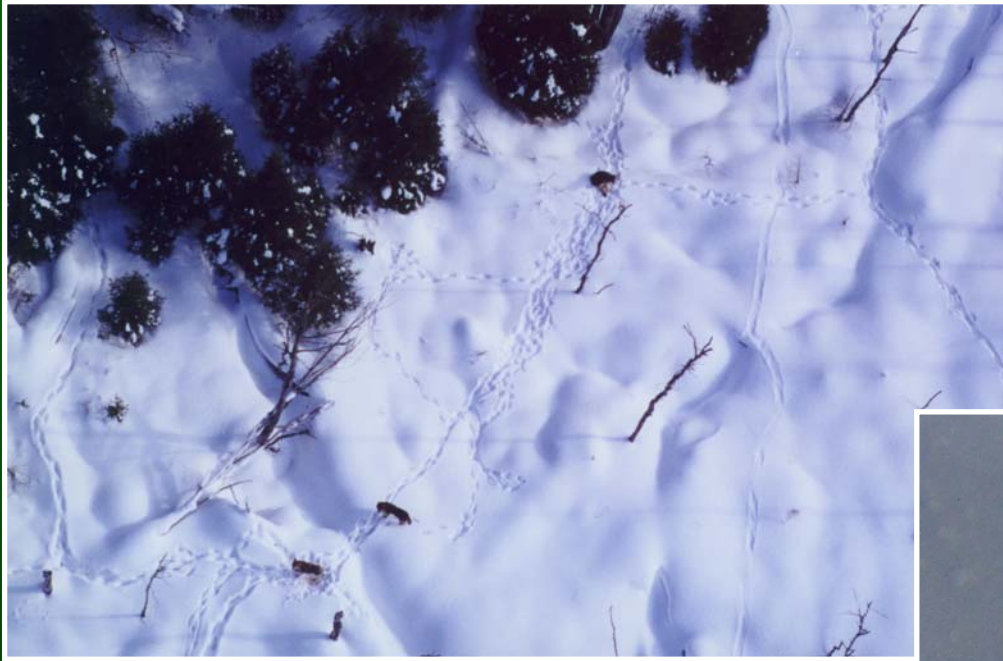
No additional reintroduction attempts



Natural Range Expansion



Population Monitoring



Aerial surveys/telemetry

>50 active collars

>14,000 locations

UP winter track surveys

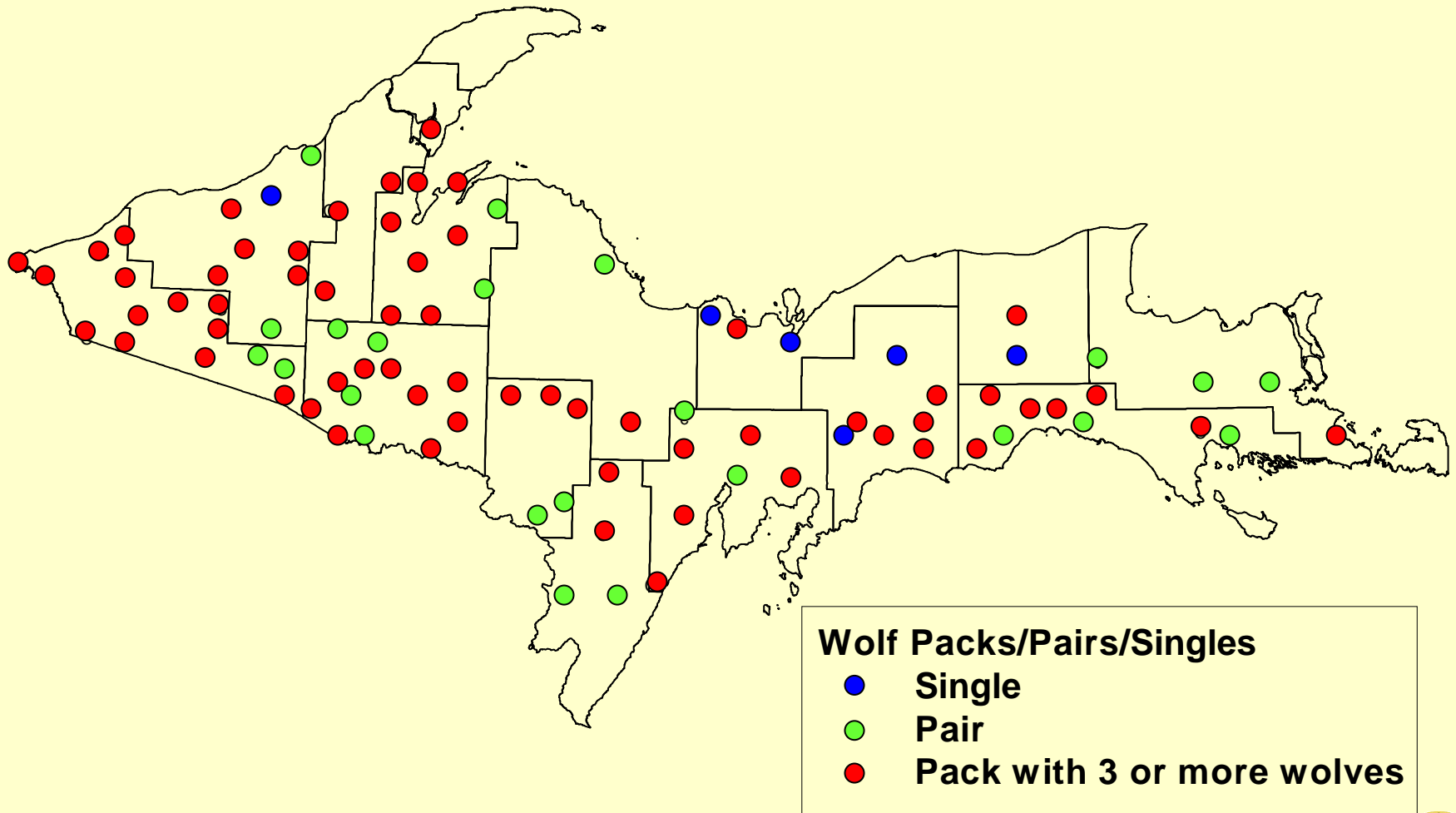
>25% roads & trails

>8,000 miles

>2,000 hours

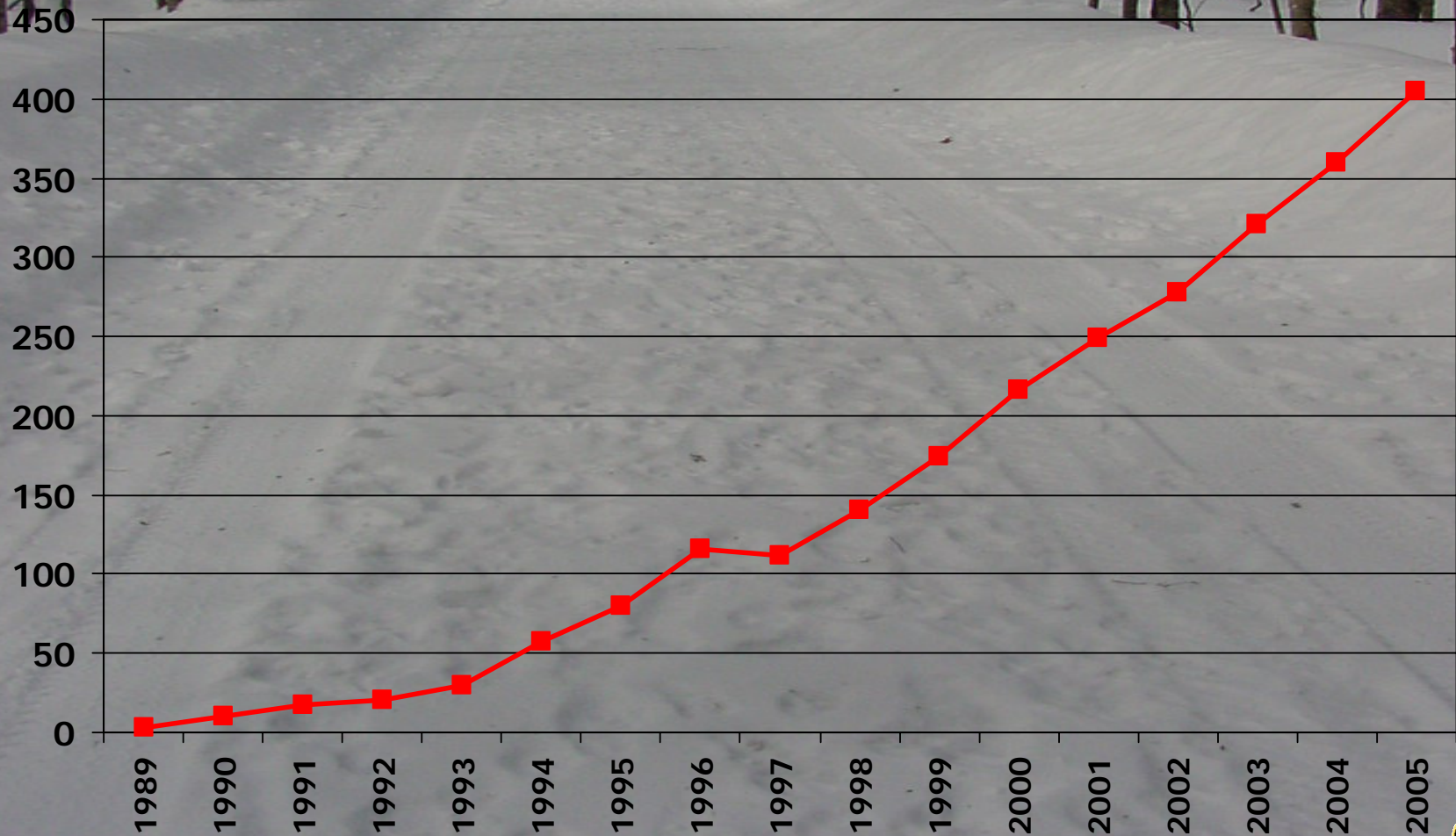


2005 UP Survey Results



Minimum Winter Population Estimates

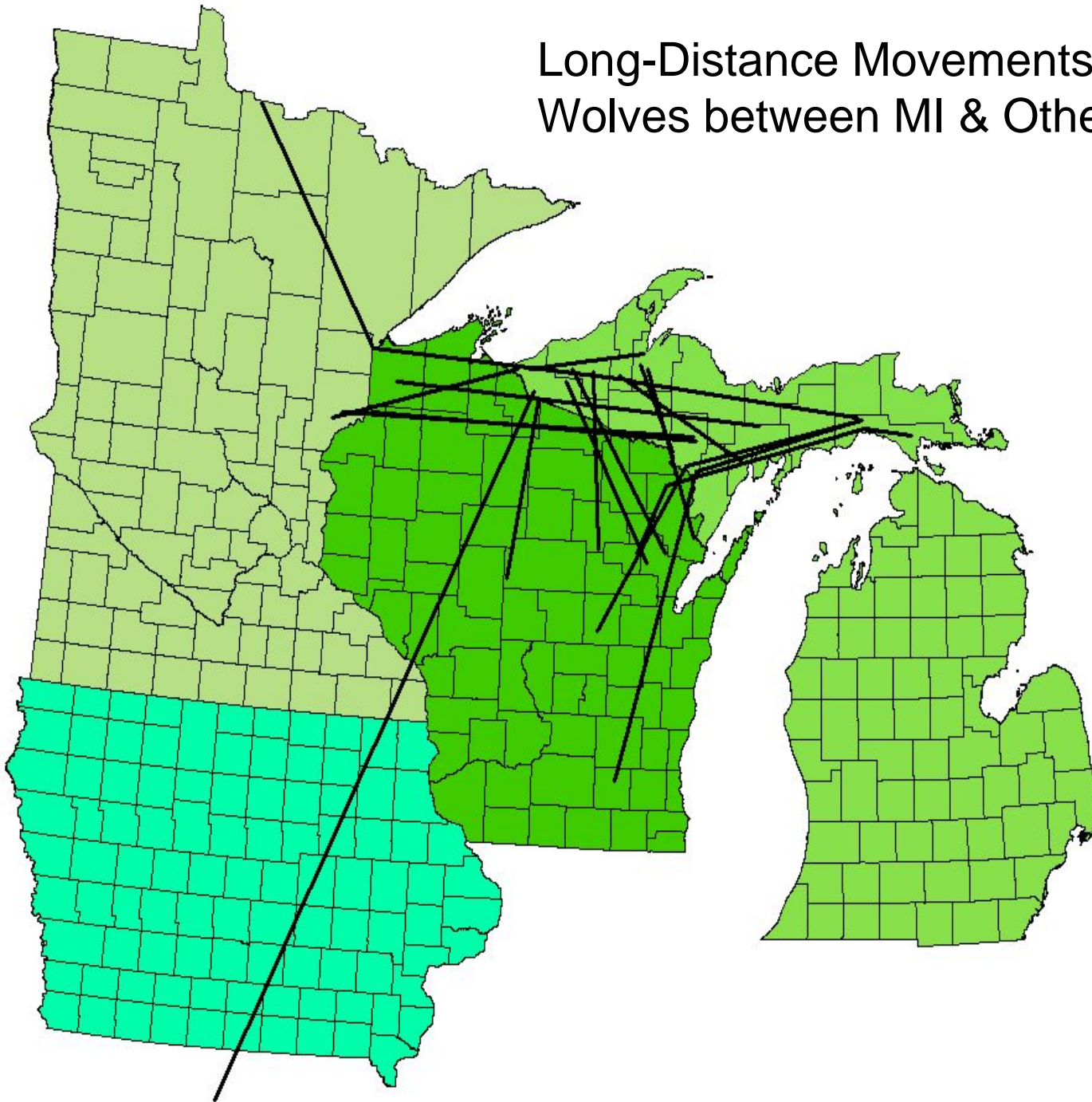
Wolves counted



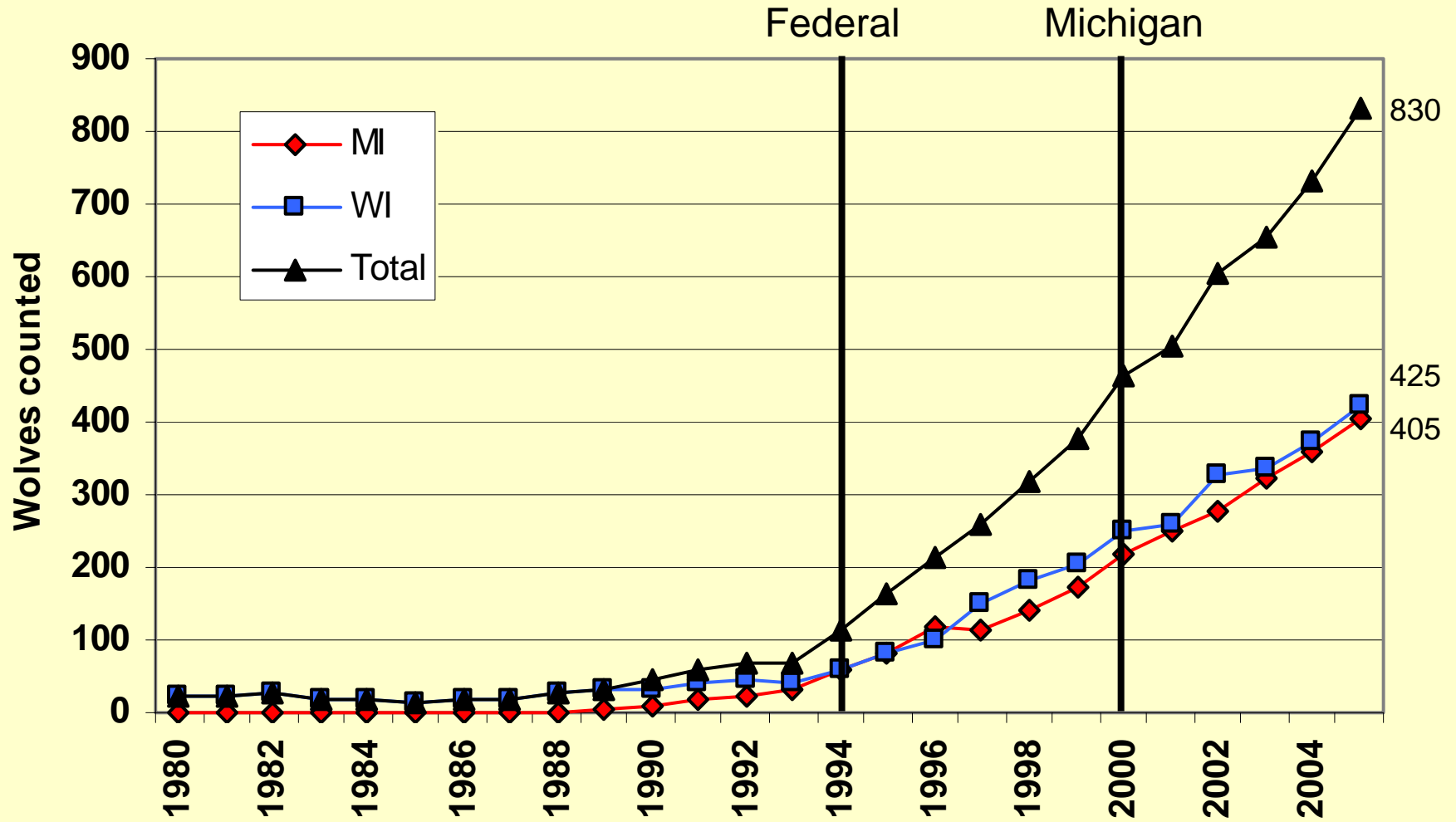
Wolf Population Survey Summary

| Parameters | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Wolves counted | 249 | 278 | 321 | 360 | 405 |
| Packs | 70 | 63 | 68 | 77 | 87 |
| Pairs | 33 | 17 | 18 | 24 | 24 |
| Loners | 5 | 8 | 11 | 6 | 6 |
| Avg. pack size | 3.5 | 4.3 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 4.6 |

Long-Distance Movements of Wolves between MI & Other States



Recovery Criteria

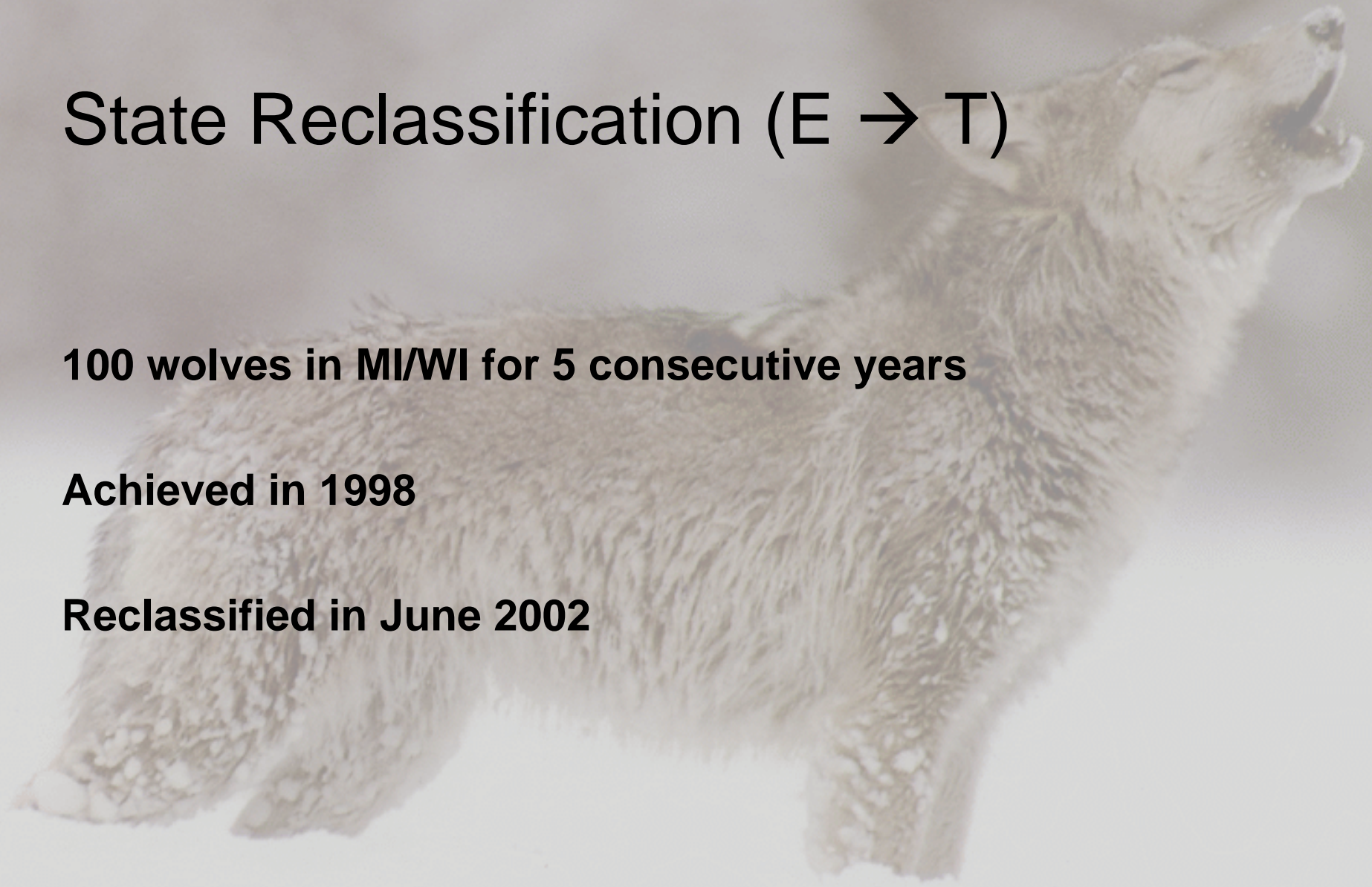


State Reclassification (E \rightarrow T)

100 wolves in MI/WI for 5 consecutive years

Achieved in 1998

Reclassified in June 2002



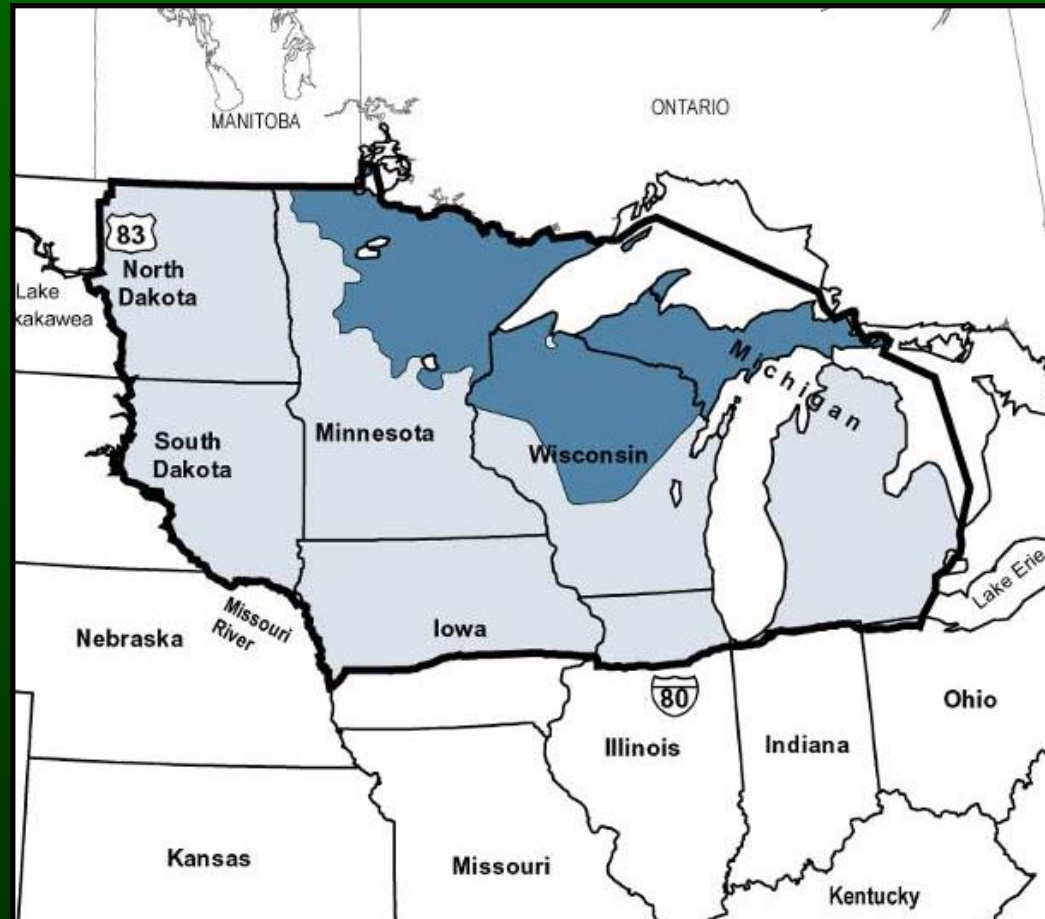
USFWS Delisting Proposal

March 2006

Proposed delisting wolves
in Western Great Lakes
DPS

90-day public comment
period

Four public hearings in
May (Marquette, Grayling)



Michigan Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Plan

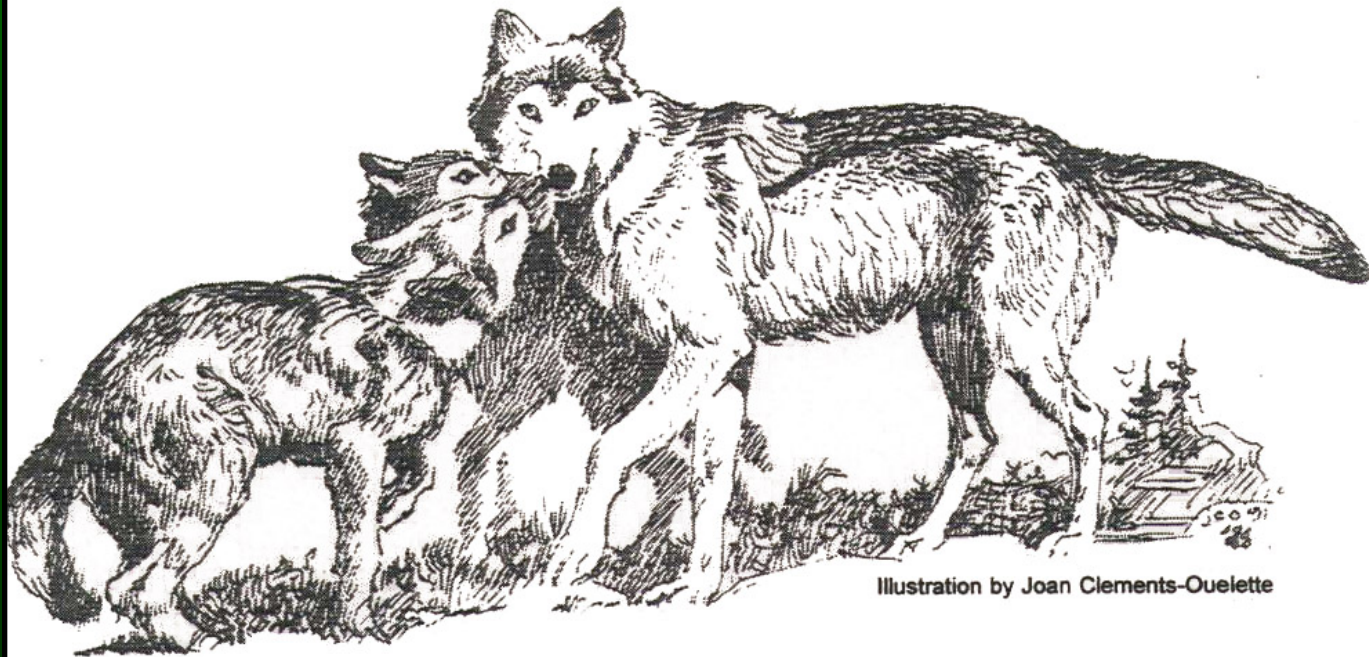
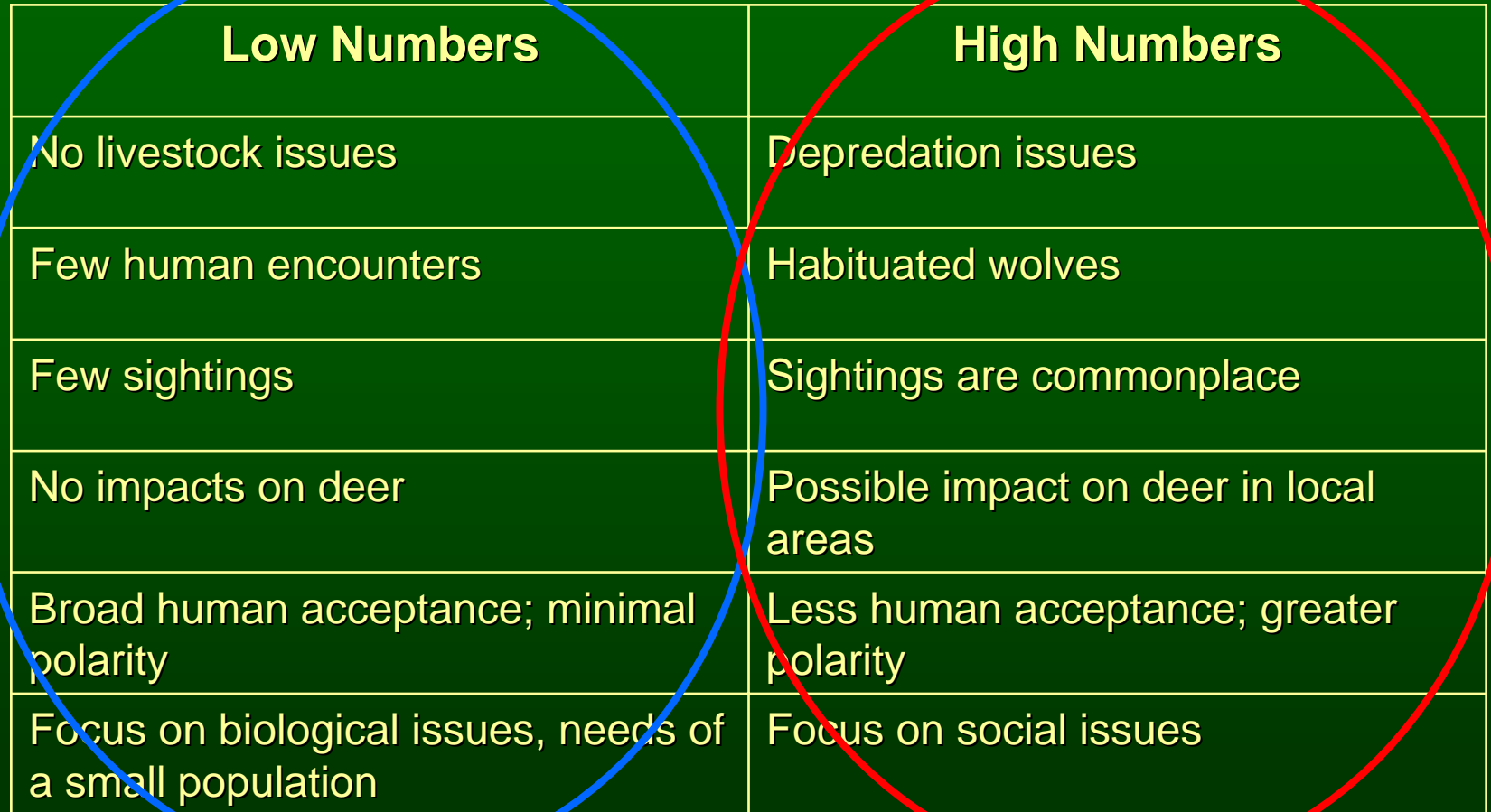


Illustration by Joan Clements-Ouelette

Low vs. High Wolf Numbers



A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is blue and labeled 'Low Numbers'. The right circle is red and labeled 'High Numbers'. The table below lists characteristics for each category, with the left column corresponding to the blue circle and the right column to the red circle.

| Low Numbers | High Numbers |
|---|---|
| No livestock issues | Depredation issues |
| Few human encounters | Habituated wolves |
| Few sightings | Sightings are commonplace |
| No impacts on deer | Possible impact on deer in local areas |
| Broad human acceptance; minimal polarity | Less human acceptance; greater polarity |
| Focus on biological issues, needs of a small population | Focus on social issues |

Need For Plan Revision



Increased population size

Shift from recovery to management

Increased focus on social issues

Address public attitudes/concerns

Anticipated change in Federal status



Wolf-Management Needs

Biological

- Ensure persistence of a viable wolf population
- Avoid State or Federal reclassification as T/E

Social

- Minimize perceived/actual risks associated with wolf presence
- Respond effectively to wolf–human conflicts
- Reflect public preferences regarding wolf abundance and management methods



Wolf-Planning Challenges

Strong emotions, divisive and controversial issues

Scientific uncertainty

Disagreements about what is true (beliefs)

Disagreements about what is important (values)

Plan Revision Process

1. Public Meetings/Comment Period
2. Human Dimensions Research
3. Reference Paper
4. Roundtable/Plan Revision
5. Public Review



Public Meetings/Comment Period

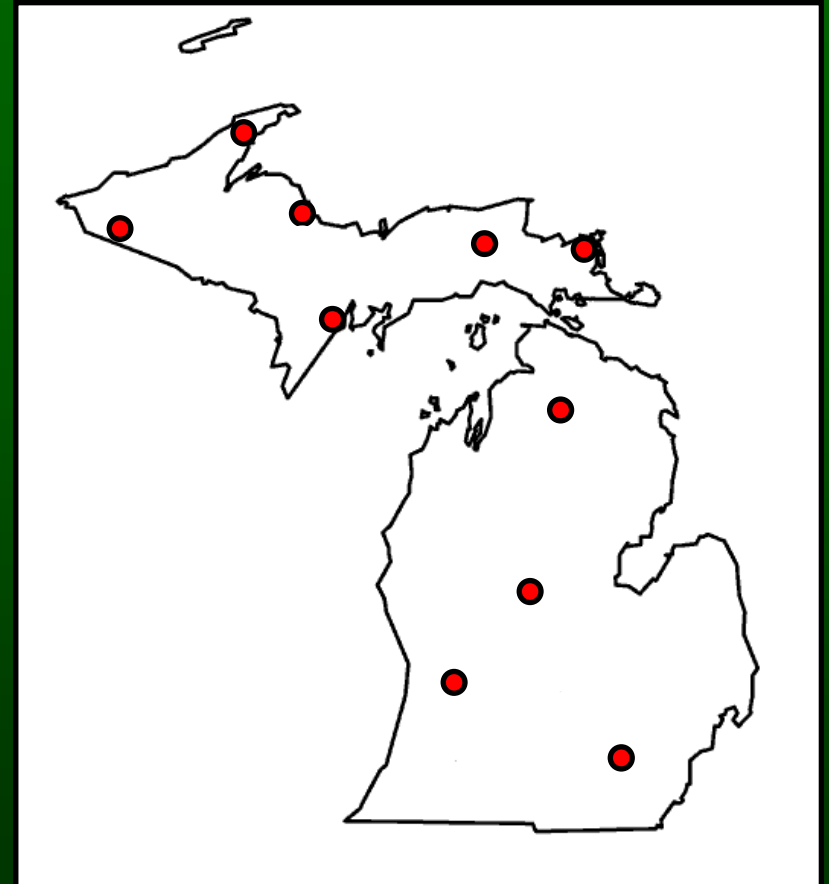
Presentation, questionnaires,
comment period, open house

560 attendees

- 70/mtg

- 35/mtg

146 emails, 36 letters



MSU Human Dimensions Research

9 focus-group meetings (78 people)

- deer hunters
- hunters who use dogs
- livestock producers
- trappers
- wolf conservationists
- wolf protectionists

9,900 mail surveys

- general public
- livestock grower
- furtaker



Reference (White) Paper

Wolf biology & status

Wolves & social carrying capacity

Review of issues (biological & social aspects)

- managing population size/distribution**
- wolves & human safety**
- wolf depredation on livestock/pets**
- wolf–prey relationships**
- recreational wolf harvest**
- habitat linkages/corridors**
- information & education**
- funding**



Wolf-Management Roundtable



Environmental/ecological interests

Hunting/trapping interests

Livestock producer interests

Public safety interests

Tourism/resource development interests

Tribal interests

Wolf protection interests



Public Review/Director Approval

90-day public comment period

Roundtable reconvene to address comments???

Final draft submitted to DNR Director for approval



Thank you



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